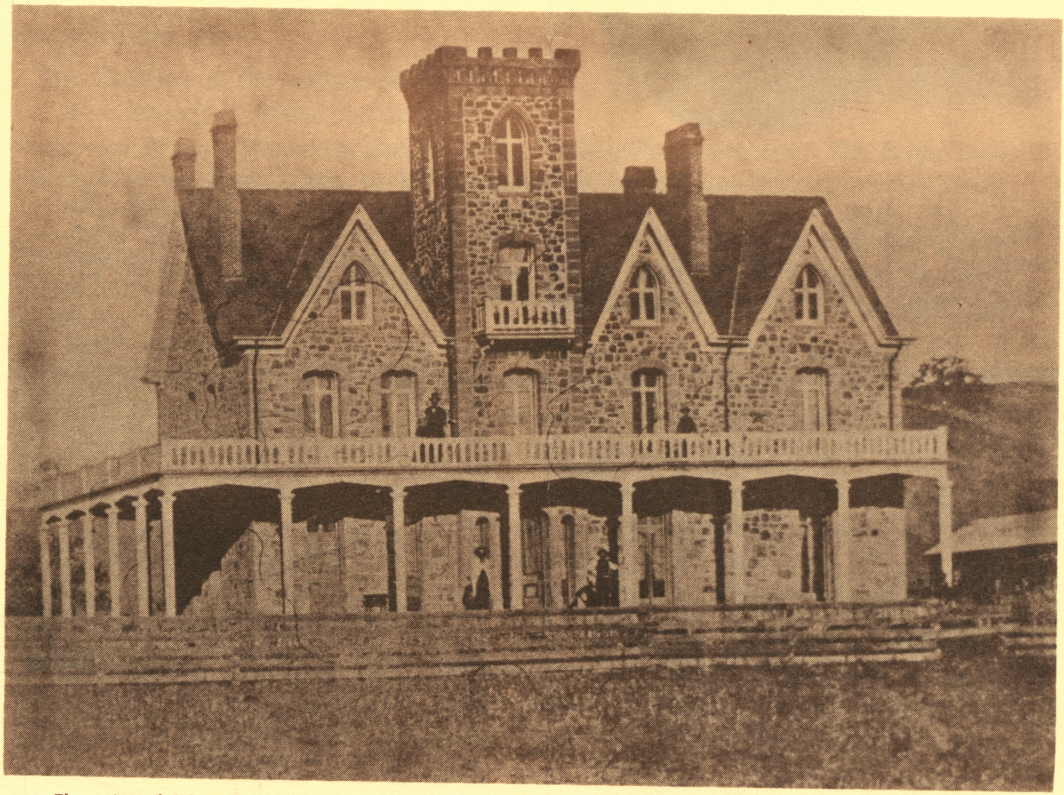
Contra Costa County Historical Society

BULLETIN

Ingrid B. James, Editor | NOVEMBER 1, 1970 | 324 Persimmon Road, W. C.

John Marsh and Early Contra Costa County History are Topic For November Membership Meeting

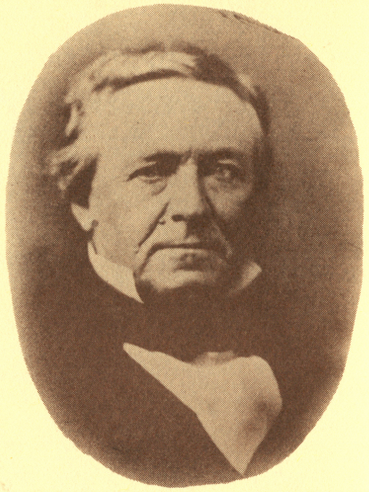


The original "Stone House" on the Marsh Ranch, completed in 1856, after Abby Tuck Marsh's death. The upper stone tower was destroyed in the earthquake of 1868, and replaced with a wooden structure. The small center balcony, in this rare photo, was also destroyed. Gentleman on main balcony is Charles Marsh, son of Dr. John Marsh.

J. C. Holliday, Director of the California Historical Society, will address the November membership meeting in Walnut Creek with the topic "John Marsh and the Early History of Contra Costa County."

The meeting will be held at the Boundary Oak Restaurant in Walnut Creek, Thursday, November 12, 1970. No-host cocktails will be served at 6:30, followed by dinner and program at 7:30 p.m.

Members of the East Contra Costa County Historical Society and their guests are cordially invited to share this evening with our Society.



DR. JOHN MARSH

Dr. John Marsh was the first practicing physician in California. He was a Harvard graduate and crossed the plains to Los Angeles in 1836. However, tales of the fertile plains, wooded slopes and rich soil of the San Joaquin Valley lured him north.

In 1838, he settled on a huge tract of land about three miles from Brentwood and started his "medical practice." His services were in demand all over the San Joaquin Valley. He was paid off with horss, cattle, tallow and hides. Thus, he became a wealthy rancher and a shrewd trader.

Today, the only visible reminder of Dr. Marsh is the great "Stone House." Built in 1856, it reflects John Marsh's supremacy in the county. Many stories have been written and told about this man. His life was one of success, controversy, and personal tragedy.

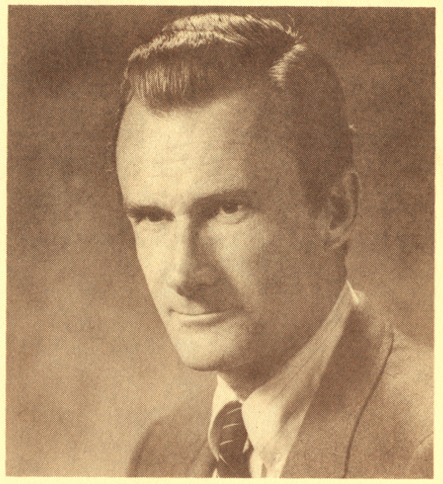
The Marsh Home has been empty most of the time. Neglected, battered by nature and vandals, it is almost a symbol of the man who built it. Having changed ownership several times, the house was deeded as a gift to Contra Costa County by the Cowell Foundation in 1960. Its fate is yet undecided.

Historical photographs from the Louis L. Stein collection may be viewed before and after the meeting. Following the address by the guest speaker Vice President Louis L. Stein will present numerous slides pertaining to John Marsh including some rare historical documents.

Dinner reservations for members and their guests are to be made with secretary James Jory, P. O. Box 190, Martinez, Calif. 94554.

Directions to Boundary Oak Restaurant: At intersection of Ygnacio Valley Road and Oak Grove Road proceed on Oak Grove Road for about one half mile in the direction of Mount Diablo. Take the second turn left, Valley Vista Road, and drive to the top of the hill.

GUEST SPEAKER



Dr. J. S. Holliday is the Director of the California Historical Society. He is a graduate of Yale University, and received his Ph.D. at the University of California in Berkeley.

His former positions are Associate Professor of History, San Francisco State College; Director, The Oakland Museum; Assistant Director, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Dr. Holliday is the author of a number of scholarly artciles and introductions, and of a forthcoming major book, **Pocket Full of Rocks: The Experience of the California Gold Rush,** to be published by Houghton Mifflin in Fall, 1971.

J. S. Holliday resides in Lafayette. He is a member of the Roxburghe Club; the Bohemian Club; Chairman of the Council of the Friends of the Bancroft Library; and member of the Executive Board of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

CHARLES MARSH,
son of Dr. John Marsh

ALICE MARSH CAMERON
daughter of Dr. John Marsh and Abby Tuck Marsh

Charles Marsh's Home, built in 1871, at 8th and Castro Streets, Oakland, Calif.

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MEMBERSHIP MEETING

DINNER & PROGRAM

Speaker: Dr. J. S. Holliday

Date: November 12, 1970

Place: Boundary Oak Restaurant
Located on
Walnut Creek Golf Course
3800 Valley Vista Road
Walnut Creek, Calif.

Time: 6:30 p.m.;
No-host cocktails

Dinner: 7:30 p.m. — $5.00

Reservations: To J. J. Jory, Sect'y
P. O. Box 190
Martinez, Calif. 94554